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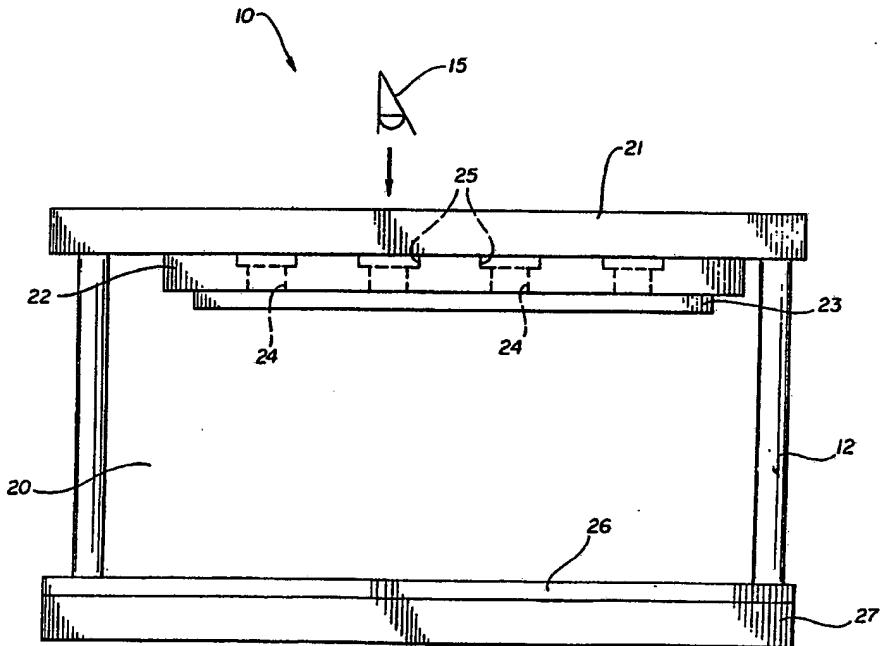
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(54) Title: ELECTROPHORETIC DISPLAY EMPLOYING GREY SCALE CAPABILITY UTILIZING AREA MODULATION



(57) Abstract

An apparatus provides grey scale capability for an electrophoretic information display (10). The electrophoretic information display (10) is an XY addressable display with each XY coordinate indicative of a given column (23) and row (25) and defining a pixel. There are described means coupled to display for impressing upon the display a predetermined digital pattern to cause certain pixels in the display to be energized with respect to other pixels in the display where the combination due to the digital pattern causes a desired grey scale level to appear on a character or on the background of the display.

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Description

Electrophoretic Display Employing Grey
Scale Capability Utilizing Area Modulation

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Technical Field

The present invention relates to electrophoretic information displays (EPID) in general and more particularly to apparatus which operates in conjunction with an EPID display enabling such a display to operate with grey scale capability.

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Background Art

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The prior art is replete with a number of various patents and articles concerning electrophoretic displays. Such electrophoretic displays have been widely described and disclosed in the prior art and essentially the assignee herein, Copytele Inc., of Huntington Station, New York has developed an electrophoretic display which has an image area of approximately 11 x 8 1/2 inches and is designed to be used either as a separate display or to be combined with other displays. The company has the ability to combine as many as four such displays to create larger area displays. The information on such displays can be changed either locally or remotely and can be viewed at an angle of nearly 180 degrees. Such displays have been extremely high resolution and can accommodate over 160,000 pixels within an image area of approximately 2.8 inches diagonally.

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In regard to such displays, reference is made to U.S. Patent No. 4,655,897 issued on April 7, 1987 entitled ELECTROPHORETIC DISPLAY PANELS AND ASSOCIATED METHODS to Frank J. DiSanto and Denis A. Krusos and assigned to Copytele Inc., the assignee herein. In

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that patent, there is described an electrophoretic display panel which includes a planar transparent member having disposed on the surface a plurality of vertical conductive lines to form a grid of wires in the Y direction. On top of the grid of vertical lines, there is disposed a plurality of horizontal lines which are positioned above the vertical lines and insulated therefrom by a thin insulating layer at each of the intersection points. Spaced above the horizontal and vertical line pattern is a conductive plate. The space between the conductive plate and the X and Y line pattern is filled with an electrophoretic dispersion containing chargeable pigment particles. When a voltage is impressed on the X and Y lines, pigment particles which are located in the wells or depressions between the X and Y pattern are caused to migrate towards the conductive plate and deposited on the plate in accordance with the voltage applied to the X and Y conductors. There is described in that patent an electrophoretic dispersion suitable for operation with the display as well as techniques for fabricating the display. Hence, in this manner the displays can be fabricated to contain large effective display areas while being relatively thin. These displays are capable of high resolution and relatively low power consumption.

As indicated, the above noted patent and others include information concerning the fabrication, operation and resolution of such displays.

As explained in U.S. Patent No. 4,833,464, issued on May 23, 1989 and entitled ELECTROPHORETIC INFORMATION DISPLAY (EPID) APPARATUS EMPLOYING GREY SCALE CAPABILITY to Frank J. DiSanto, et al., it is a problem with such displays to provide grey scale

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capability. Grey scale capability is a well known term of the art and has been utilized for example in regard to the description of television receivers and various other types of data presentation, such as 5 facsimile and so on. In the case of television receivers, the response of the receiver can be visually determined by means of typical test patterns such as those test patterns that were previously transmitted and displayed when, for example, a 10 television station goes off the air. Various television stations frequently transmit such a pattern for the convenience of service technicians and so on. The pattern apart from showing correct linearity, for example, also shows correct reproduction of the 15 background shading which can indicate proper frequency response. The correct reproduction of the five color shades in the center target area of the test pattern indicates proper mid-frequency responses.

As one can ascertain, such test patterns are 20 associated with grey scale capability, namely with the display of various grey levels as located between black and white. Such grey scale capability is a desirable feature in conjunction with any type of display. An electrophoretic display either presents a 25 black or white type of representation of an image which is conveniently referred to as dark or light. Basically, the color of the image is a function of the color of the pigment particles and the color of the suspension that they are suspended in. The display 30 may be black and white, yellow and black and so on.

There is a wide variety of many potential color combinations which can be employed in regard to such displays. The above-noted U.S. Patent No. 4,833,464, describes apparatus and techniques for grey scale

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operation for an electrophoretic display panel. The apparatus includes circuitry which operates with a timing generator which produces a plurality of different time duration output wave forms which are applied to the X and Y drive as associated with the display. In this manner, by applying a set of voltages for a given duration time interval, a display is provided which results in the incomplete removal of pigment from associated selected pixels. Hence, those pixels appear darker than surrounding pixels but not as dark as the pure dye solution as associated with the display. Thus, the amount of pigment removed and hence the darkness of each pixel is a function of the time duration during which the appropriate voltage is applied to the rows and columns of the display. The timing generator can cause different pixels as displayed to have different darknesses or grey scale values by varying the time during which the voltage is applied to the display.

As will be further explained, grey scale operation at different shades of grey can also be provided on the electrophoretic display by means of area modulation. Area modulation can be used to shade either the foreground, the background or both the foreground and the background. Such electrophoretic displays, as other displays, portray information by writing in two different colors or shades of the same color. These, of course, can be referred to as black or white, although many other color combinations are available as indicated above. Thus, in an electrophoretic display, the normal background color is the color of the pigment used in the display and the written characters and graphics are generated by removing pigment from the appropriate areas. In the

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reverse or inverse video mode the pigment is removed from the background while pigment is retained in the areas of the characters or graphics. This is the same difference, for example, between a negative and
5 positive in photography. As will be explained, by performing area modulation by writing a pattern of either black or white pixels in either the background, foreground or both, permits generation of shades of grey. It is also understood that area modulation can
10 be used with any relatively high resolution display to in fact provide a grey scale capability for the display.

It is therefore an object of the present invention to provide an electrophoretic display having
15 grey scale capability.

It is a further object of the present invention to provide an electrophoretic display apparatus which has grey scale capability and which operates to modulate the area about each character or the area
20 within each character on a display.

Disclosure of the Invention

Apparatus for providing grey scale capability for an electrophoretic information display (EPID), wherein
25 said electrophoretic display is an X-Y addressable display with each X-Y coordinate indicative of a given column and row intersection, with each X-Y coordinate defining a pixel, which pixel when energized provides a different intensity display as compared to a non-
30 energized pixel comprising of means coupled to said display for impressing upon said display a predetermined digital pattern to cause predetermined pixels in said display to be energized with respect to

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other pixels in said display in accordance with a desired grey scale level.

Brief Description of the Drawings

5 Fig. 1 is a side plan view of an electrophoretic display (EPID) employed in this invention;

Fig. 2 is a perspective plan view of an electrophoretic display panel showing a given number of grid and cathode lines;

10 Fig. 3 is a graph depicting a character block displayed on a conventional black and white display;

Fig. 4 depicts a character displayed with a predetermined area modulated background pattern;

15 Fig. 5 shows still another area modulated pattern;

Fig. 6 is a diagram showing still another pattern;

Fig. 7 is a diagram showing still another pattern;

20 Fig. 8 is a diagram showing an alternate pattern;

Fig. 9 is a diagram showing still another alternate pattern;

Fig. 10 is a diagram of a character block showing an alternate background pattern;

25 Fig. 11 is a diagram of a character block showing an alternate background pattern;

Fig. 12 is a schematic diagram partially in block form showing a circuit for deriving a grey scale value for an electrophoretic display employing area modulation;

30 Fig. 13 shows an OR gate employed in this invention;

Fig. 14 shows an AND gate employed in this invention;

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Fig. 15 shows a logic circuit for providing grey background or characters; and

Fig. 16 shows a logic circuit for providing the character and background features.

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Best Mode for Carrying Out The Invention

Referring to Figure 1, there is shown a side view of a typical electrophoretic display 10. The display 10 of Figure 1 is filled with an electrophoretic solution 20 which includes light colored pigment particles suspended in a dark dye solution. For examples of such solutions and techniques, reference is made to the above cited U.S. Patent No. 4,655,897.

It is also understood that the display can consist of a dark pigment suspended in a light solution and so on. As seen from Figure 1, the display contains a front glass sheet or viewing surface 21. The eye of the viewer 15 is shown viewing the front of the display via the glass sheet 21. Superimposed upon the glass sheet 21 by suitable etching techniques are columns 23 and rows 25. The rows are made from an extremely thin layer of idium-tin-oxide (ITO) while the columns are made from thin layers of aluminum or other suitable metal. These patterns, as indicated, are provided in extremely thin layers and constitute an XY matrix. The layers of ITO as can be seen by reference to the above-noted patent are relatively thin being approximately 3000 Angstroms thick. The grid or columns and the rows or cathodes (XY) are spaced from one another and insulated from one another by means of an insulating layer 22. While the grids and cathodes have been specified in terms of rows and columns, it is understood that the terms can be interchanged as desired. Each of the grid and

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cathode intersections are associated with a pigment well 24. These wells contain electrophoretic solution which is in the cavity 20. The columns and rows are separated from a back electrode 26 which is also fabricated on a sheet of glass 27 and constitutes a thin layer of ITO. The spacers such as 12 and 23 can be implemented in many different ways and essentially serve to mechanically separate the display or panel 10. In operation of the display, the pigment particles contained in the electrophoretic solution 20 are brought forward towards the viewing surface in order to fill the wells formed between the rows and columns. Once a well such as 24 is filled, the voltage on the rows and columns and rear cover is then set, such that the wells remain filled, but pigment spaced between the rear cover and the columns are swept onto the rear cover plate 26. At viewing side 21, one sees the color of the pigment in the wells. By selectively applying voltages to the rows and columns, the pigment in the individual wells 24 (at the intersection of the rows and columns selected) is forced out of the wells exposing the dye solution and making that intersection (pixel) dark. The removal of the pigment from the wells is not instantaneous but requires a period of time which depends upon the dimension of the cell or display, the fluid components, and the various supply voltages. The above-noted U.S. Patent No. 4,833,464 discusses the control of the voltages and the duration of the same to control grey scale operation. The techniques for performing area modulation in conjunction with an electrophoretic display will be described in detail.

Referring to Figure 2, there is shown a plan view of an enlarged representation of an electrophoretic

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display cell or panel according to Figure 1. As seen in Figure 2, each well is accommodated between an intersection of a column metal layer 23, which is insulatively separated from a row layer of ITO 25.

5 The well 24 forms a pixel area which is indicative of an XY intersection of the ITO display. Thus, as one will understand, the object of the present invention is to provide grey scale capability and this grey scale capability is performed in a high resolution electrophoretic display. It is noted that the resolution of the display has to be high to accommodate area modulation and derive the particular aspects and benefits of this technique.

10 Referring to Figure 3, there is shown a representation of the letter E as for example, displayed on a conventional electrophoretic display. In regard to the following discussion, it will be indicated that the states of the electrophoretic display, for example as shown in Figure 3, are black and white. It is understood that the letter E will be visible if the pixels were darker than the background.

15 As indicated above, area modulation is accomplished by writing a pattern of either black or white pels in either the background, the foreground or both. The high resolution provided by an electrophoretic display permits the use of area modulation to generate shades of grey. Area modulation can be employed with any relatively high resolution display. Appearance of the grey scale due to area modulation is a physiological consequence of the resolution of the human eye. The effect is obtained when the angle suspended by the black and white pels as seen by the viewer, approaches the resolution of the human eye. In a typical

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electrophoretic display as provided by the assignee herein, Copytele Inc., a resolution of 200 lines per inch in both the horizontal and vertical directions is available.

5 This resolution is ideal for producing grey scale by means of area modulation. On an electrophoretic display with this resolution, characters are written using a character block of 16 pixels horizontally and 24 pixels vertically. As seen in Figure 3, both the
10 horizontal and vertical directions are indicated by means of gradations as 30 and 31. These gradations encompass an area which is indicative of a pixel. Hence, as one can see, there are essentially 16 boxes or pixels representing the top line in the image area
15 32 depicted in Figure 3. Thus, again referring to Figure 3, it is indicated that with the above-noted resolution of 200 lines per inch in both the horizontal and vertical directions, character blocks consisting of 16 pixels or pels horizontally and 24
20 pels vertically are typical. This character block yields a display with 25 lines of 80 characters each on a display whose dimensions are approximately 6.4 x 3.2 inches. Thus, as one can ascertain from Figure 3, there is shown the character E which is represented in
25 black on a relatively white background. It is, of course, understood that the inverse of this image could also be provided by the electrophoretic display.

Referring to Figure 4, there is again shown the character E within the character block 32 having a 50 percent grey background. Essentially, the character E is the same as shown in Figure 3 but the background consists of alternate pixels of black and white as can be seen, for example, from Figure 4. Across the top line 40, the 16 pixels are indicative of white, black,

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white, black and so on. On line 41, the pattern is black, white, black, white and so on. This pattern then continues to alternate down and across the display so that it alternates as to the 16 horizontal pixels and the 24 vertical pixels. The background appears grey when the image is viewed at a distance where the individual pels are unresolved. Because of this property, the number of grey shades obtainable via area modulation is again a function of the display's resolution, the size of the character and the viewing distance. As one can ascertain, the background area is modulated accordingly to produce patterns which have grey scale capability due to the nature of the modulation technique.

Referring to Figure 5, there is shown the character block which now possesses an area modulated background which is 93.25 percent black. This is obtained by formulating each horizontal line within the character block, all within the display area by means of a particular Hex code. As seen in Figure 5, line 50 is indicative of the Hex code EE where black is equal to binary one and white is equal to binary 0. Based on the display format shown in Figure 5, in order to obtain a background which his 93.25 percent black, one modulates the display lines as follows. The first line 50 as seen is BBBWBBBWBBBWBWW (Hex EE). The next three lines 51, 52, and 53 are all black or all B (Hex FF). The fourth line is BWBBBBWBWWBWWB (Hex BB). At the right of each line, there is shown the Hex code for the line. As one can see from the Hex code notation, it is a repetitive pattern which specifies the display background as in Figure 5 to obtain a background which is 93.25 percent black. The line pattern for the display of Figure 5

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is HEX, EE, FF, FF, FF, BB, FF, FF, FF and repeats for the 24 lines.

Referring to Figure 6, there is shown an area modulated background or character block which is 87.5 percent black. The Hex line values are shown at the right hand side to denote the repetitive pattern. As one can see from Figure 6, line 61 is BWBBBWBBWBBBWBB which is Hex code BB. Line 62 is all black which is Hex FF. Line 63 is BBBWBWBWBWBWBWB which is hex code EE. Line 64 is all black as Hex code FF.

Referring to Figure 7, there is shown an area modulated background pattern which is 62.5 percent black. The Hex code is shown at the right and is a relatively simple repeating code with the first line 15 70 being WBBBBBWBWBWBWB or Hex 77. Line 71 is BBWBWBWBWBWBWBWB which is Hex DD and then the pattern repeats as Hex 77, DD, 77, DD, 77, DD...etc.

Referring to Figure 8, there is shown a pattern which is 50 percent black and has a simple repeat as 20 line 80 is BWBWBWBW... etc. Line 81 is WBWBWB etc. which respectively denotes the Hex code of AA and 55, which code repeats for the 24 lines.

Referring to Figure 9, there is shown an area modulated display or character block which is 37.5 percent black. The Hex code is shown on the right as 25 line 90 is Hex code AA as for example indicative of line 80 of Figure 8, while line 91 is Hex code 44 which is WBWWWBWWWBWWBWW. Line 92 is the same as line 90 (AA) while line 93 is Hex code 11 or 30 WWWBWWWBWWWBWWB. The code then alternates as seen in Figure 9.

Referring to Figure 10, it depicts a character block or display having 25 percent black background.

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The Hex code is shown on the right hand side for each line.

Referring to Figure 11, it shows a display or character block, the Hex code again at the right exhibiting a 12.4 percent black background. As one can ascertain, the above-noted figures essentially depict six different patterns which six patterns will yield seven different shades of grey when viewed at normal viewing distance on a 200 x 200 line per inch electrophoretic display. These patterns coupled with black and white yield a system with nine shades of grey. However, in practice, a background of 12.5 percent black can be omitted as exhibiting a small difference from white. The patterns as one can easily ascertain, which are distinct are shown in Figures 5-11. These figures represent various patterns which yield different shades of grey when viewed at a normal viewing distance on a 200 x 200 line per inch electrophoretic display.

The system as shown with a 200 line resolution including black and white can produce eight different effective shades of grey. The patterns used to achieve area modulation in a character type or graphics type display when the graphics are formed using special characters must be a factor of the character block. For example, in a display using a character block which is 16 pixels wide and 24 pixels high, the width of the area modulated pattern must be a factor (divisor) of 24 and the height of the pattern must be a factor (divisor) of 16. The figures shown in the above-noted application, as indicated for example in Figure 3, are patterns which are designed for a 16 x 24 pel character block. The figures show patterns which have increasingly more white (less

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grey), however, the actual grey shade that the human eye perceives is dependent upon many factors including display type, ambient lighting, color and other factors. It may be necessary to have unequal increments in the percentages of black and white in successive patterns to generate scales which are subjectively more and more grey.

There are many techniques as one can imagine for accommodating area modulation which can be implemented simply by using registers and appropriate gating modules.

Displays using shades of grey require that an attribute which describes the image foreground and background colors be designed for each character. The attribute length depends on the total number of different color combinations required. For example, if only one intermediate shade of grey is required between black and white then there are only six combinations of foreground/background colors. These six states are most readily encoded using 4 bits. Bit 0 and 1 specify the foreground color while bits 2 and 3 define the background color. In typical display systems, a byte is devoted to the attribute even though not all 64 states definable by 8 bits are used. The implementation of such a system can be done in a variety of ways.

Simple implementation for generating a grey background is to OR the pel data and the selected AM pattern (Black = binary 1 and White = binary 0). This can be done in real time as the pel data and the character data is loaded into shift registers or into the drive circuitry. In systems which use a pixel memory it can be done as the pel data is generated or is loaded into the pixel memory. To make the

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characters or graphics a shade of grey, the procedures described can be used except that the "OR" function is replaced with an "AND" function. In inverse video, the function used to obtain a grey background is the
5 AND function between the pixel data and the amplitude modulated pattern. To make the characters grey in inverse video, one would employ the OR function.

Referring to Figure 12, there is shown a circuit configuration in block form for an electrophoretic
10 display panel 10 which is associated with area modulation as described above. Of course, it is understood that the cathodes and grids while described previously in the XY planes can be reversed whereby the cathode lines can be arranged in the Y plane with the grid lines in the X plane or vice versa. As one
15 can see from Figure 12, each Y line such as 30 and 31 is associated with suitable drive amplifiers 32 and 33, where each X line such as lines 34 and 35 are associated with suitable amplifiers 36 and 37. It is
20 of course seen in Figure 12, that the dots or dashes between amplifiers 36 and 37 and 32 and 33 are employed to indicate a plurality of additional individual amplifiers indicative of a large number of lines. In this manner, by applying proper biasing
25 potentials to respective amplifiers, one can cause pigment particles to migrate at any intersection between the X and Y matrix as formed by the associated grid and cathode lines. Thus, based on the X and Y matrix, one can therefore produce any alphanumeric
30 character. For such displays with a large plurality of intersections or pixels, one can provide graphic data such as a television picture and types of other displays on the display panel 10. The display which is the electrophoretic display is provided with high

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resolution based on the technique of fabricating line patterns and based on presently available display techniques. The driver amplifiers 32 and 33 and 36 and 37 are fabricated by typical integrated circuit techniques and may for example be CMOS devices, which are well known and many of which are available as conventional integrated circuits. As indicated, the resolution of the electrophoretic display panel is high based on modern integrated circuit techniques and including the fabrication techniques employed in conjunction with such displays. It is anticipated that the resolution of such displays can be as high as 40,000 dots per square inch. As seen from Figure 12, the Y amplifier such as 32 and 33 are coupled to a Y address register 41. The address register 41 is a well known component consisting of various conventional decoding devices including buffer registers and so on for the storage of data and interfacing with the various columns associated with display 10. In a similar manner the amplifiers 36 and 37 have inputs coupled to an address module 40 which is similar to module 41 and operates to provide the Hex address information for the XY intersections provided by the display. Means for addressing an XY matrix is solved by many typical circuit solutions in the prior art and such decoders as the Y address register 41 and the X address register 40 are well known components in the prior art.

Both the X and the Y address registers are coupled to master decode module 50 which operates to decode data and to generate the X and Y addresses for such data as is conventionally known.

Coupled to the decode module 50 which again may be a typical microprocessor or another programmed

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device is an area modulation memory 51. The area modulation memory 51 contains in storage suitable digital patterns, such as for example the Hex codes as shown in Figure 4-11 which will enable one to produce 5 a display according to a desired grey background. The stored data as indicated is associated with 4 bits which determine the darkness or content of both the background and foreground depending upon whether one wants to introduce the grey in the foreground or to 10 introduce the grey in the background. The area modulation memory contains the patterns as shown in the above-noted figures to enable one to provide 6 or more levels of grey associated with a particular display and according to the preference of the user. 15 It is, of course, indicated that each line of the display can be modulated by means of the code contained in memory 51 to thereby produce a uniform grey or other background for the entire display. In a similar manner, one can also modulate each character 20 block in a different manner or modulate each line in a different manner or a portion of the display to produce various grey formats throughout the display. This can enable one to highlight certain regions of 25 the display or certain areas of the displayed text with respect to the other areas and according to the intensity of the foreground or background. The decode module 50 is also coupled to a character generator 52 which character generator is a conventional component. The character generator 52 is coupled to a keyboard 30 53. The character generator 52, the decoder 50 and the keyboard 53 may be part of a conventional computer system such as a PC system. There is another path shown in Figure 12, whereby there is a data receiver 57 which is capable of receiving data from a typical

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telephone line or other transmission medium. This data receiver may be a conventional modem. The output of the data receiver is coupled to an analog to digital converter 56 for transforming the analog signals at the input to digital signals at the output of the analog-to-digital converter 56. The analog-to-digital converter 56 is associated with a digital signal pixel generator 58 which operates in conjunction with the master decoder 50 to allow one to perform area modulation at various pixel sites as desired. The output of the decoder 50 is also coupled to the X address register and the Y address register 40 and 41. The area modulation memory 51 is shown coupled to the decoder 50, but can of course be part of the microprocessor memory where a certain section will be reserved for the different area modulation background codes. As shown in Figure 12, the module designated as grey scale select 60 is coupled to the area modulation memory 51. The module 60 decodes the particular grey scale request which data may be forwarded to the module 60 by means of the character generator 52 or by means of the decoder 50. In this manner, the system by decoding the transmitted data would automatically determine what grey scale is to be utilized for a particular display. This can be automatically done by means of suitable decoders or can be implemented at the preference of the user. As shown in Figure 12, the character generator 52 is also coupled to the grey scale select module 60 and a user while viewing an image can go ahead and select the grey scale value desired and according to the preference of the user. As one can immediately ascertain from Figure 12, area modulation can be simply implemented. One technique of implementing the

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area modulation is that the decoder or microprocessor 50 combines the area modulation code as stored in the area modulation memory with the data code. For example, if black is equal to 1 and white is equal to 5 0 then an "AND" or "OR" function can be used. In the OR function, whenever a pixel does not contain data, the pixel would receive the exact binary digit indicative of the background code. Where a pixel does contain data, the output will be a 1 if the data is a 10 1. If the data is 0 and the background is a 1, the output would also be a 1 according to the area modulation pattern as stored. Thus, the OR function provides a full black or dark character with the selected grey background as stored in the area 15 modulation memory 51. Thus, the patterns depicted in the above-noted Figures 5-11 can be combined with the data pattern, to provide AND and OR functions or both as will be further explained. To present the characters or graphics with a desired shade of grey, 20 the procedures described above can be used except the OR is replaced with an AND function.

In this manner, both the data and the area modulation bit must be the same in order to produce a black spot at the output. If they are not the same 25 then the color of the pixel remains white. As one can see, one will produce a character having a different grey scale which is presented on an all white or in the case of a negative application on an all black background. In an inverse video mode the function 30 used to obtain a grey background is the AND function occurring between the pixel data and the stored area modulation pattern. To make the characters grey in an inverse video mode, one would employ the OR function between a grey background pattern and a pixel data

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pattern. As indicated above and briefly described, either the characters (foreground) or the background of a display can have grey scale. Both these options and the no grey scale option can be readily generated by means of simple combinatorial circuits.

Referring to Figure 13, no grey scale requires no gating. The grey background is accomplished by OR gating the character data bit stream with the grey scale pattern bit stream as shown in Figure 13. Thus, as indicated in Figure 13, there is shown an OR gate 70 with one input designated as CHAR representative of the character bit stream and the other input designated as the grey bit steam.

As one can ascertain, the grey bit stream would be that stream or data which has been defined in conjunction with Figures 5-11.

Referring to Figure 14, there is shown an AND gate 71 having one input designated as by CHAR and indicative of the character bit stream and the other input receiving the grey bit stream as again shown in the above-noted figures. The output of the AND gate 71 is directed to the display or to the display drivers as is the output of gate 70. The grey characters are generated by the AND gate 71 which will produce grey character on a constant background.

Typically, the color of each character can be described by a number of additional bits which are designated as attribute bits or an attribute byte. This set of bits or byte are normally required for each character to be displayed. The number of bytes of attribute data could be reduced by means of many different schemes which are not pertinent to this aspect of the invention. For example, an attribute

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byte with the following bit interpretations can be employed for generating grey scale displays.

00000000 no grey scale (black characters
on white).

5 00000001 grey background with black characters.
00000010 grey characters with white background.

It is noted that in the above examples only 2 bits, as for example, the first and second bits are needed to generate the grey display. The other bits 10 typically are used to specify the shade of grey desired. For simplicity, assume the desired grey shade has been selected and will be used when grey is required. With these assumptions and the example 15 attribute code specified above, only a simple logic circuit is required to generate the required bit stream.

Referring to Figure 15, there is shown a logic circuit capable of generating an output signal for the display which provides a grey background or a grey character as controlled by the attribute bits. As 20 seen in Figure 15, the attribute bits designated as A0 and A1 define the type of display. For example, 00 is no grey, 01 is a grey background and 10 is a grey character. As one can see, the character bit stream 25 is directed to a 3 input AND gate 80 and is also directed to a 2 input AND gate 81. The grey bit stream is directed to one input of an OR gate 82 and to one input of the AND gate 81.

In this manner, as one can ascertain, the 30 attribute bits which are A0 and A1 are applied to inverters 83 and 84. The output of inverter 83 is directed to one input of AND gate 80 and one input of AND gate 85. The output of inverter 84 is applied to one input of AND gate 80 and to one input of AND gate

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86. The output of OR gate 82 is coupled to one input of AND gate 86 while the output of AND gate 81 is coupled to input of AND gate 85. As seen, the AND gates 85 and 86 also receive the attribute bits which are the uninverted bits. The outputs of the three AND gates 85, 86 and 80 are coupled to three inputs of an output OR gate 87, which supplies the output display bit stream. For the combination of attribute bits, the bit streams are suitably directed through appropriate gates to provide a grey background with a black character, to provide no grey, or to provide a grey character on a light background. The logic implemented by the circuit should be well understood by those skilled in the art.

15 Referring to Figure 16, there is shown a logic arrangement which based on the attribute bit table shown will produce either no grey, a grey background, a grey character, grey background of a given intensity or a grey background of another intensity specified as grey No. 2. Thus, as seen in the Figure 16, the attribute bits A1 and A0 can combine to produce no grey, a grey 1 background with black characters, grey No. 2 with a white background, grey No. 1 background with grey No. 2 characters. Thus, the logic circuit shown in Figure 16 defines a simplified logic circuit which is predicated on using either a grey pattern of a first intensity for the background and another grey pattern of a different intensity for the foreground and so on. These are indicated as a grey No. 1 pattern and a grey No. 2 pattern. Both of these patterns are typical of those patters, for example, shown in Figures 5-11 as described above. Again the character bit stream is inserted into the circuit with

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the attribute bits A0 and A1 having the binary characteristics depicted in the table of Figure 16.

In a similar manner, the circuit of Figure 16 has four output AND gates designated as 90, 91, 92 and 93 with gate 90 being a no grey gate, gate 91 producing the grey 1 output as a background, gate 92 producing the grey 2 character and gate 93 enabling one to provide a grey 1 background and a grey 2 character. A description of each of the individual gates in the uninverted state as for example, gate 93 receives the A1 uninverted as does gate 92, while gates 91 and 90 receive the A1 inverted signal. One can immediately ascertain the operation of the above-described circuit by referring to Figure 16.

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Claims

1. Apparatus for providing grey scale capability for an electrophoretic information display (EPID), wherein said electrophoretic display is an X-Y addressable display with each X-Y coordinate indicative of a given column and row intersection, with each X-Y coordinate defining a pixel, which pixel when energized provides a different intensity display as compared to a non-energized pixel comprising:

means coupled to said display for impressing upon said display a predetermined digital pattern to cause predetermined pixels in said display to be energized with respect to other pixels in said display in accordance with a desired grey scale level.

2. The apparatus according to Claim 1, wherein said pixel when energized causes a dark intensity to be displayed as compared to a lighter intensity when not energized with said darker intensity corresponding to a black level and with said lighter intensity corresponding to a white level.

3. The apparatus according to Claim 1, wherein said digital pattern is impressed on said display by means of AND logic means to cause characters as written on said display to exhibit said grey scale level with respect to the background of said display.

4. The apparatus according to Claim 1, wherein said digital pattern is impressed on said display by means of OR logic means to cause said background to exhibit said grey scale level with respect to characters on said display.

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5. The apparatus according to Claim 1, wherein said means further includes logic means operative to cause both characters written into said display and said background of said display to be energized according to said digital pattern and in accordance with said desired grey scale level.

6. The apparatus according to Claim 1, further including memory means for storing therein a plurality of digital patterns each one indicative of a different desired grey scale level, and
5 means coupled to said memory means for selecting any desired one of said stored digital patterns for application to said display.

7. The apparatus according to Claim 6, wherein said electrophoretic display is a high resolution display.

8. A method of providing grey scale capability for an electrophoretic information display (EPID) of the type employing pixel selection, comprising the steps of:

5 storing a plurality of digital patterns with each stored pattern capable when applied to an electrophoretic display to cause predetermined selected pixels in said display to be energized with respect to other pixels in said display in accordance
10 with a desired grey scale level, and

selecting a stored pattern for application to said display to cause said display to exhibit said grey scale level.

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9. The method according to Claim 8, wherein said energized pixels are background pixels to provide a grey background with respect to a different intensity character.

10. The method according to Claim 8, wherein said energized pixels are character pixels to provide a grey character with respect to a different intensity background.

11. The method according to Claim 10, wherein said different intensity background is indicative of white.

12. The method according to Claim 10, wherein said stored digital patterns are at least six patterns indicative of six different grey scale levels.

13. The method according to Claim 10, further including the step of "OR"ing said selected pattern with a character pattern prior to applying said character pattern to said display to display a given
5 intensity character on a background of said selected grey scale level.

14. The method according to Claim 10, further including the step of "AND"ing said selected pattern with a character pattern prior to applying said character pattern to said display to display a given
5 intensity background having a character impressed thereon of said selected grey scale level.

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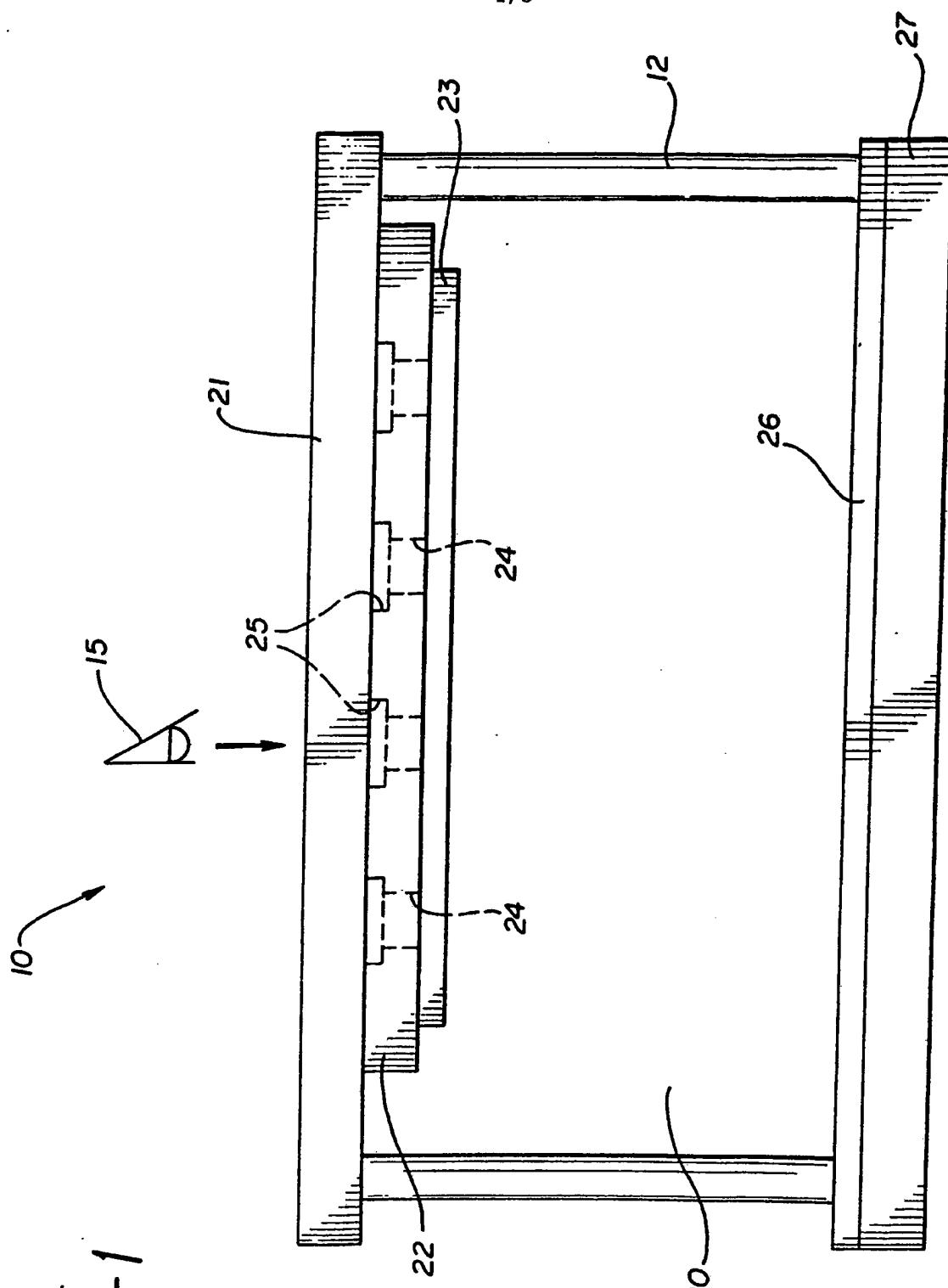


FIG-1

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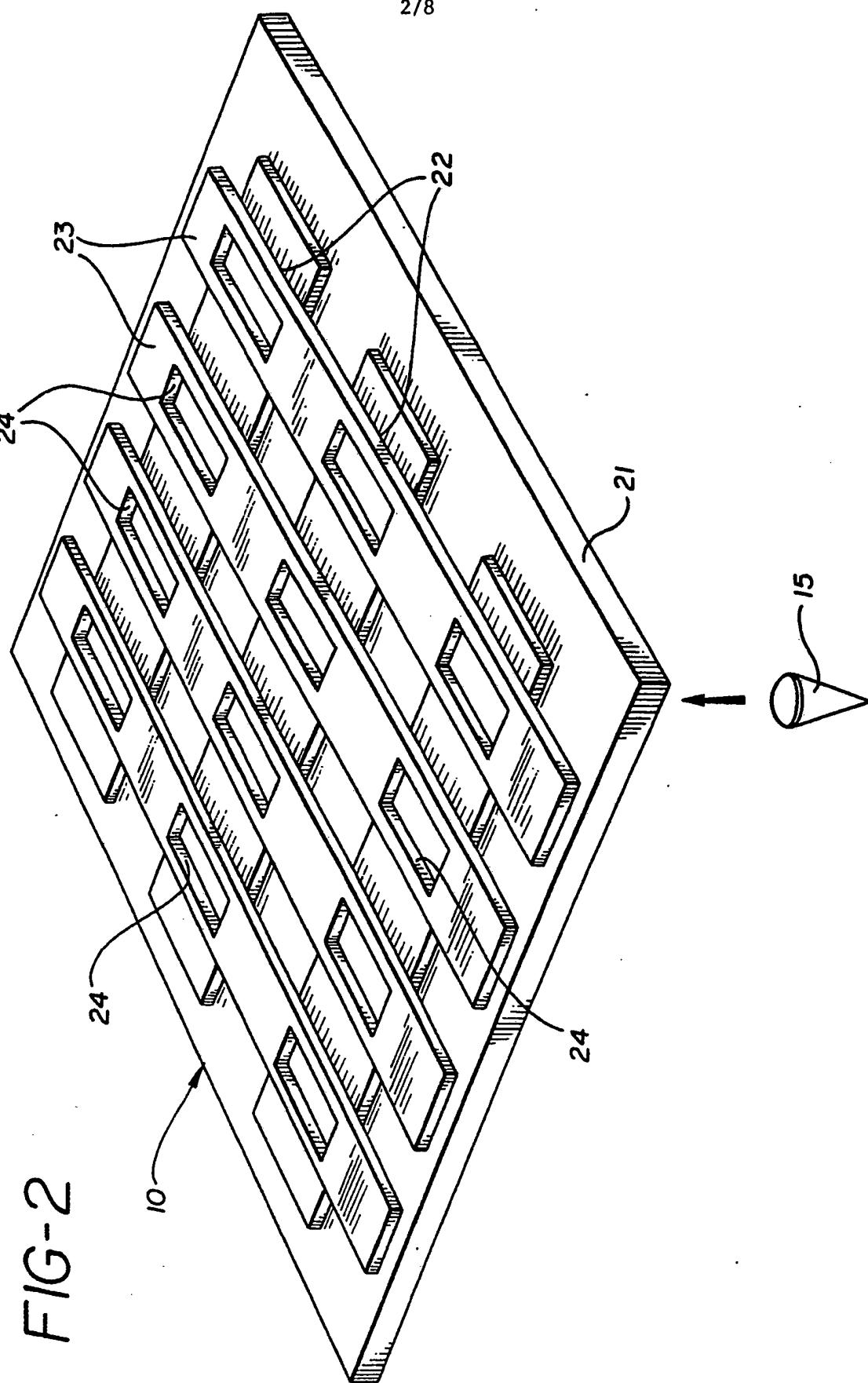


FIG-2

SUBSTITUTE SHEET

FIG-3

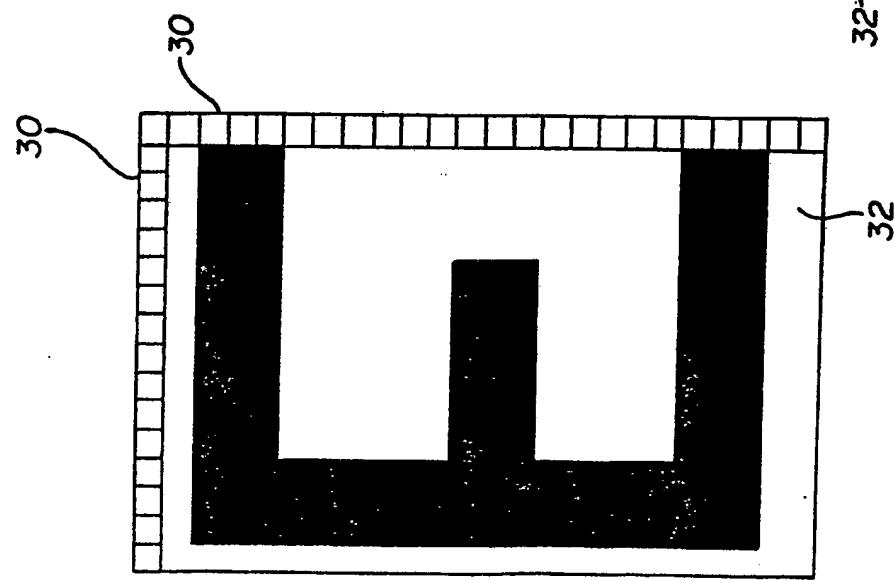


FIG-4

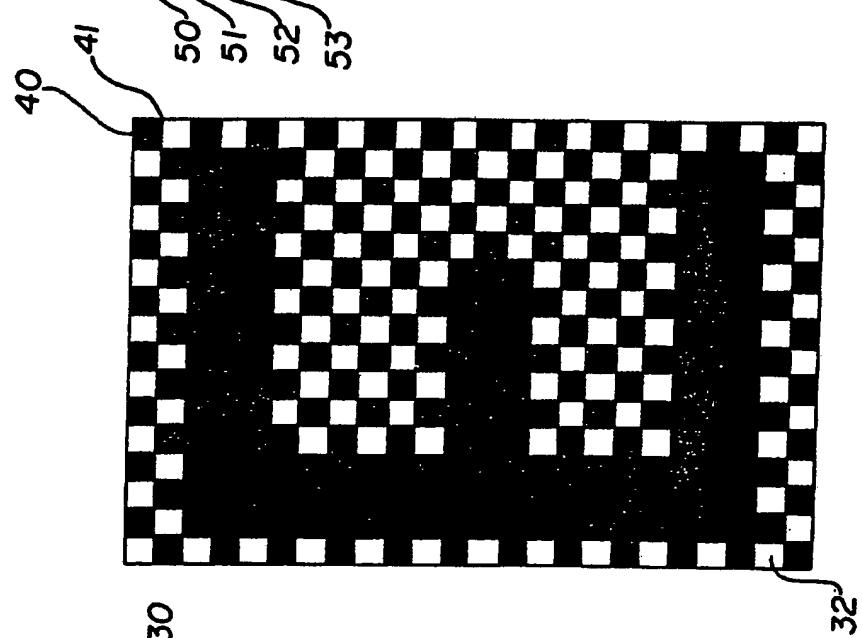
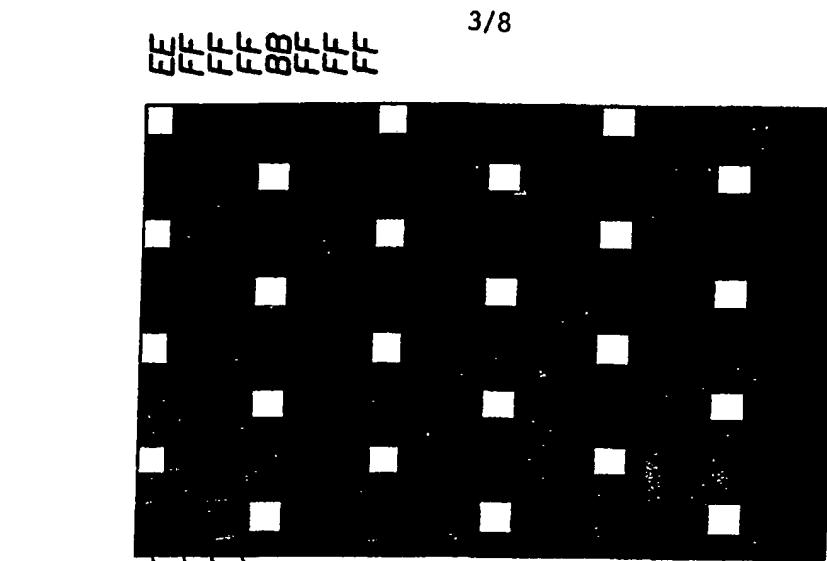


FIG-5



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FIG-6

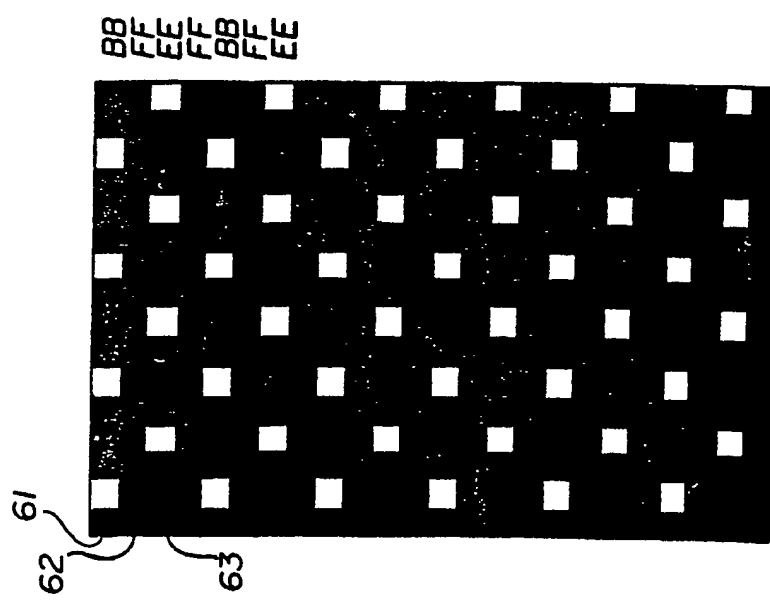


FIG-7

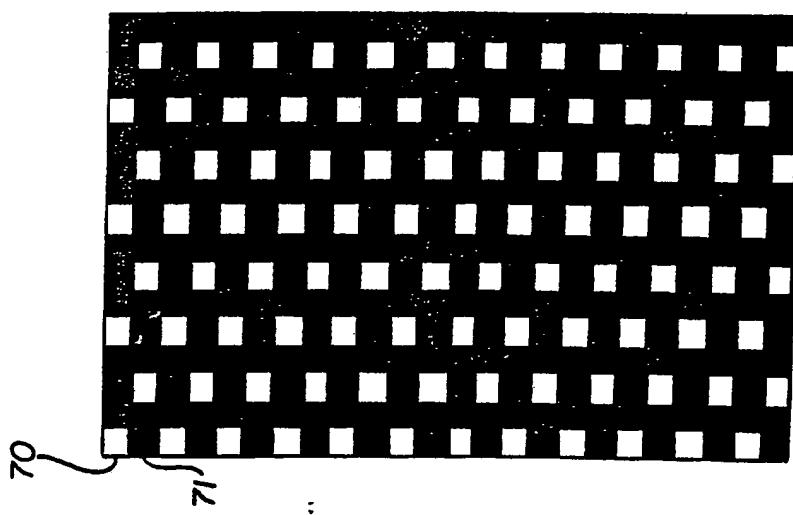
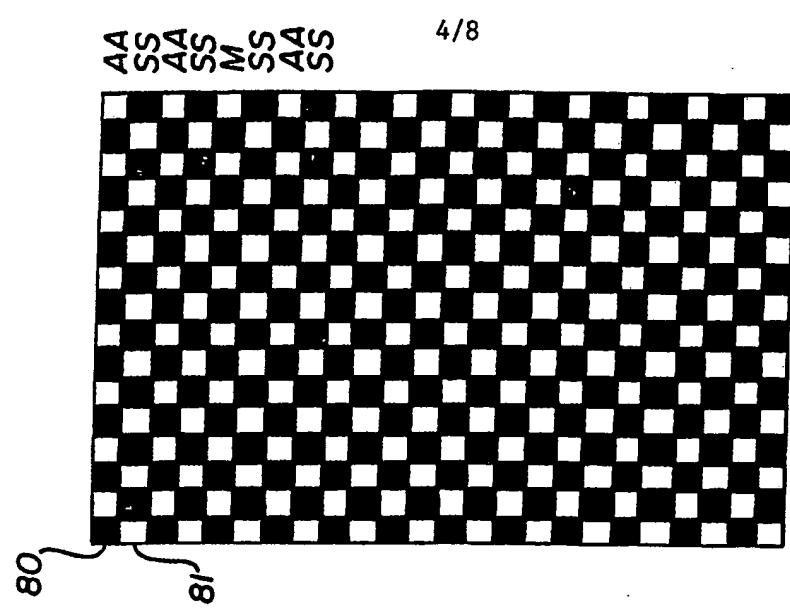


FIG-8



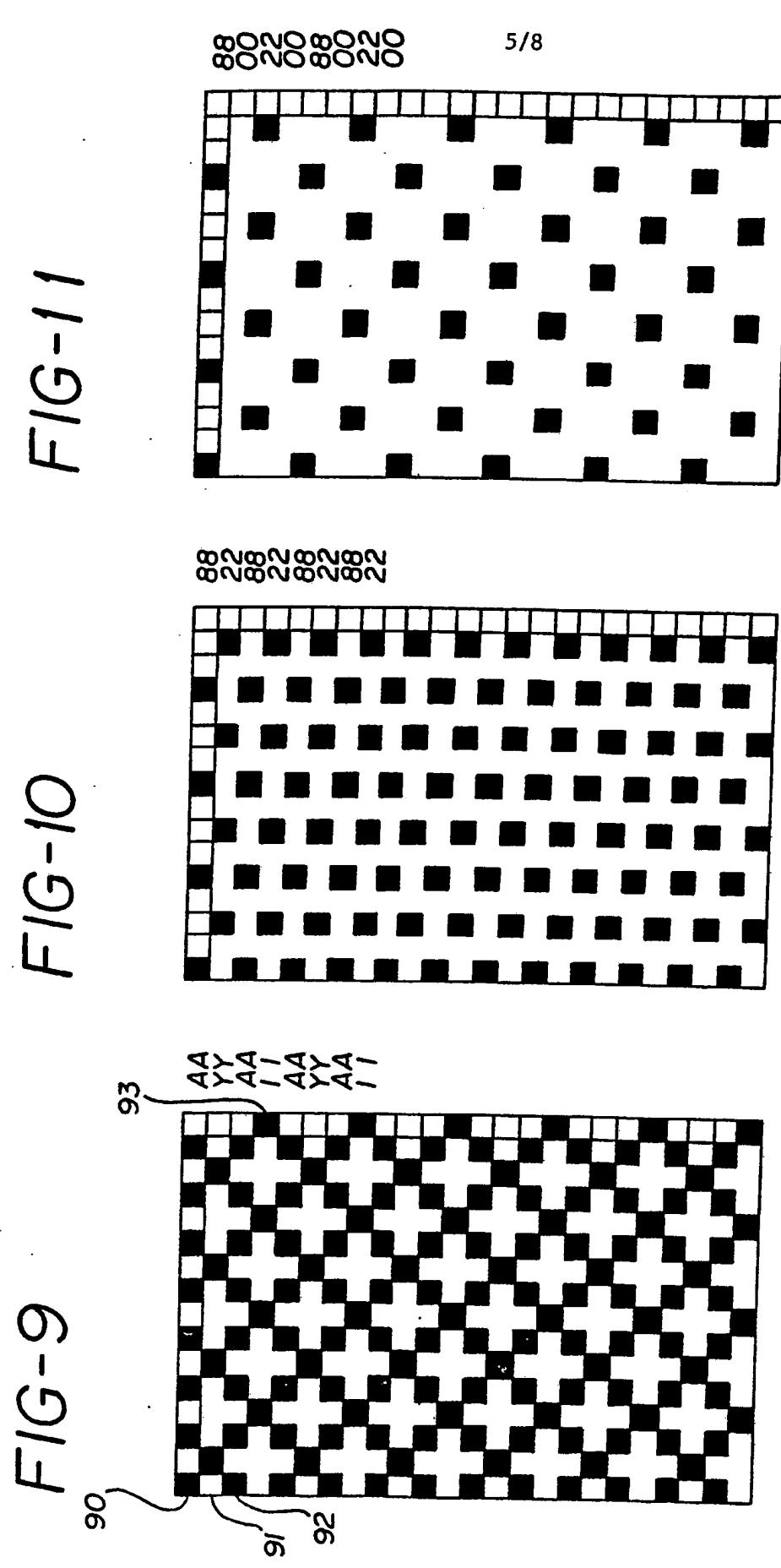


FIG-12

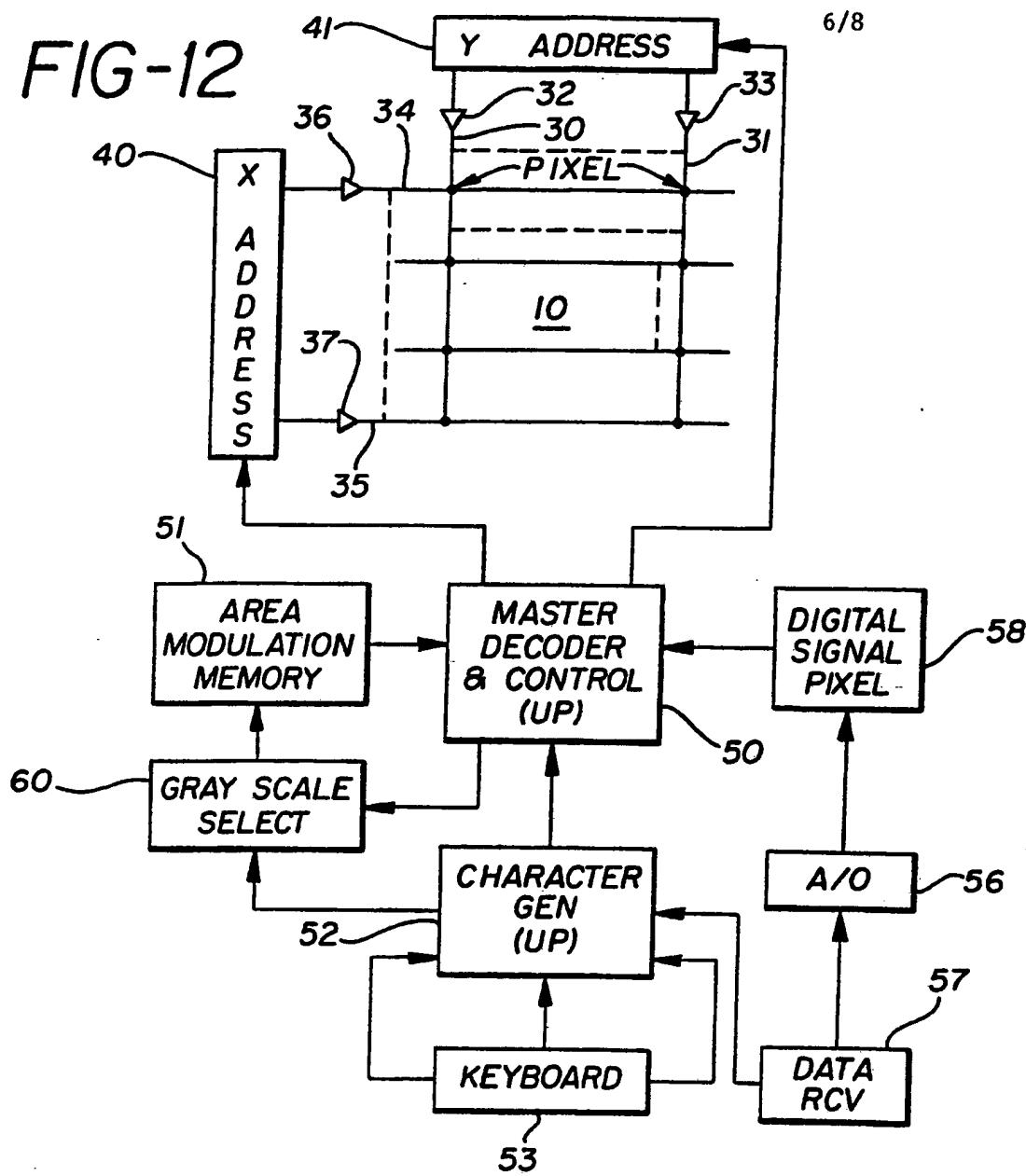


FIG-13

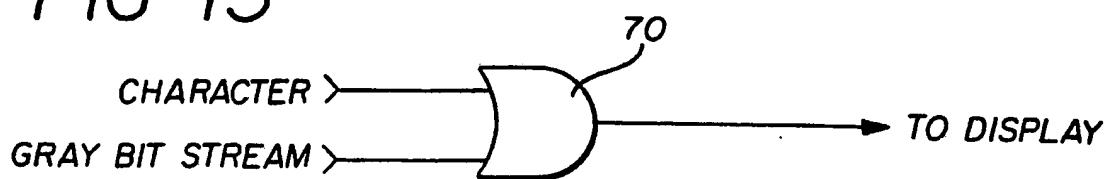
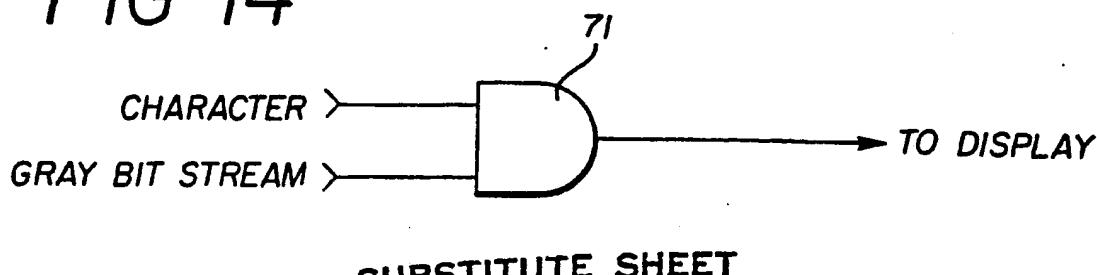
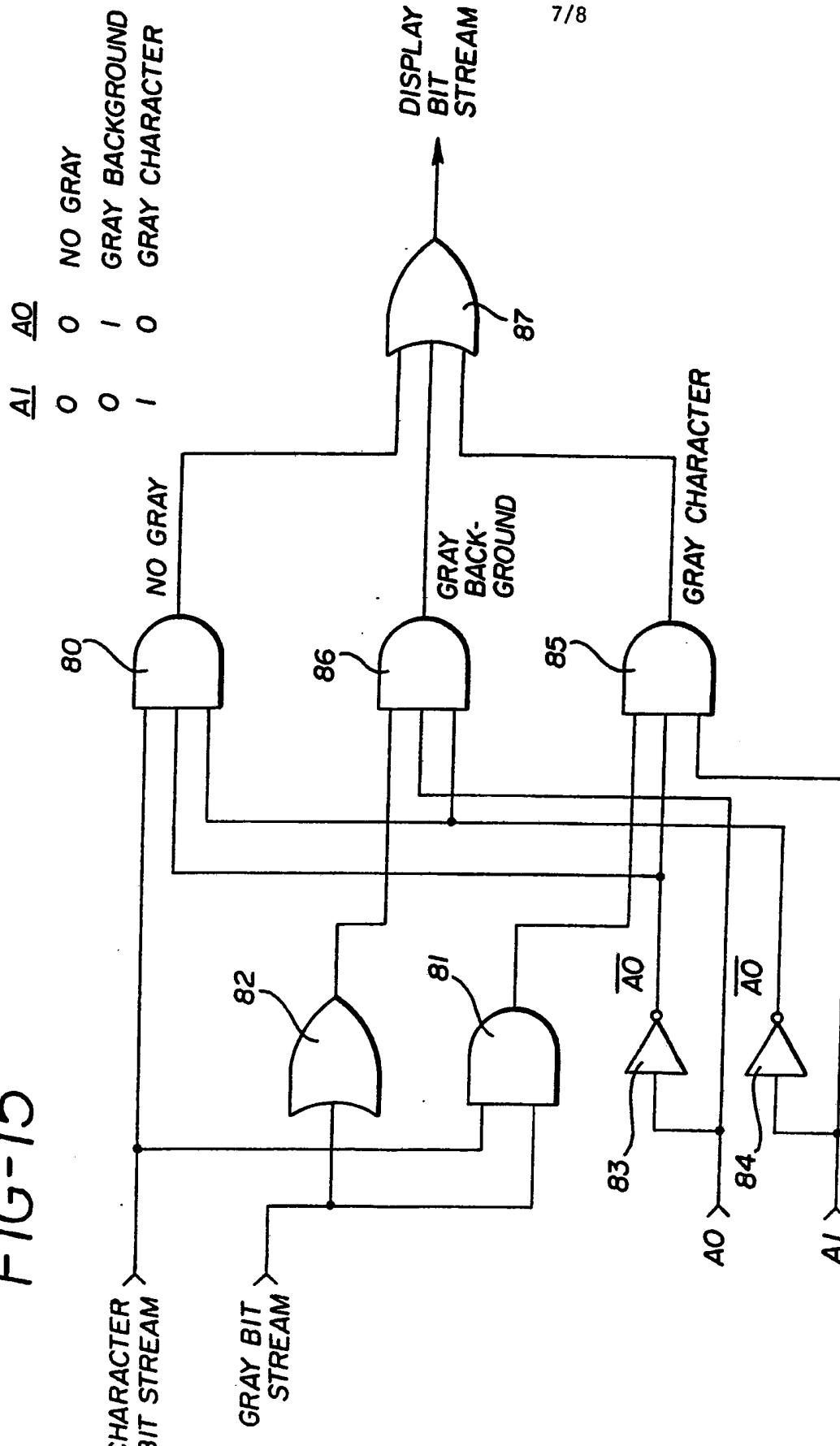


FIG-14



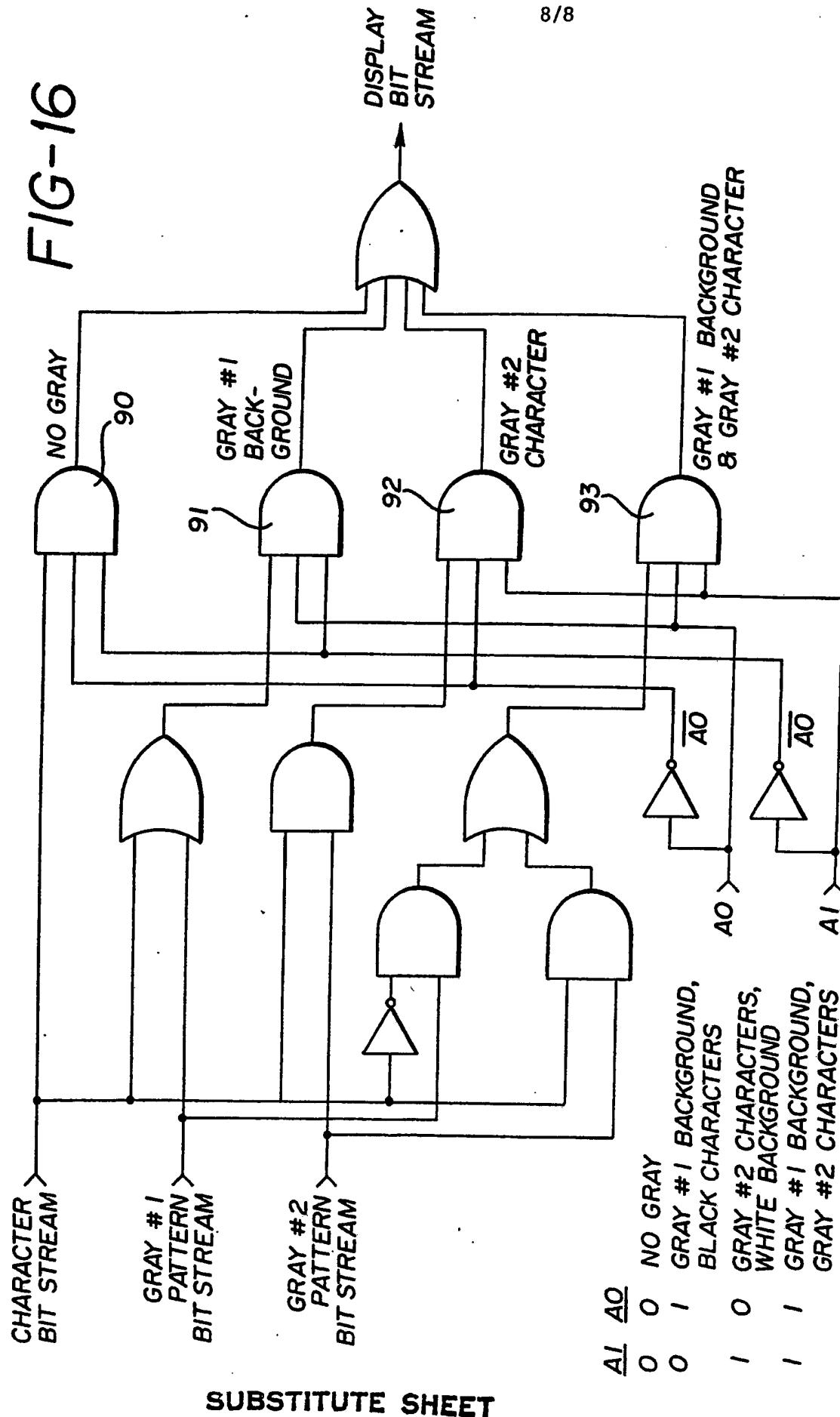
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FIG-15



SUBSTITUTE SHEET

FIG-16



INTERNATIONAL SEARCH REPORT

International Application No. PCT/US91/04834

I. CLASSIFICATION OF SUBJECT MATTER (if several classification symbols apply, indicate all) ⁸

According to International Patent Classification (IPC) or to both National Classification and IPC
IPC (5): G09G 3/34
U.S.CI.: 340/787

II. FIELDS SEARCHED

Minimum Documentation Searched ⁷

| Classification System | Classification Symbols |
|-----------------------|---|
| U.S. | 340/787, 767, 793, 703; 358/236, 230, 429 382/50, 54 |

Documentation Searched other than Minimum Documentation
to the Extent that such Documents are Included in the Fields Searched ⁹

III. DOCUMENTS CONSIDERED TO BE RELEVANT ⁹

| Category ¹⁰ | Citation of Document, ¹¹ with indication, where appropriate, of the relevant passages ¹² | Relevant to Claim No. ¹³ |
|------------------------|--|-------------------------------------|
| Y | US, A, 4,833,464 (DISANTO ET AL.) 23 May 1989 See the entire document. | 1-14 |
| Y | US, A, 4,688,031 (HAGGERTY) 18 August 1987 See the entire document. | 1-14 |
| Y | Patent Abstracts of Japan, publication number 63287828, issued 17 March 1989, "Liquid Crystal Display Controller" (TSUGUJI). | 1,2,5-12 |

* Special categories of cited documents: ¹⁰

- "A" document defining the general state of the art which is not considered to be of particular relevance
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- "P" document published prior to the international filing date but later than the priority date claimed

- "T" later document published after the international filing date or priority date and not in conflict with the application but cited to understand the principle or theory underlying the invention
- "X" document of particular relevance; the claimed invention cannot be considered novel or cannot be considered to involve an inventive step
- "Y" document of particular relevance; the claimed invention cannot be considered to involve an inventive step when the document is combined with one or more other such documents, such combination being obvious to a person skilled in the art.
- "&" document member of the same patent family

IV. CERTIFICATION

Date of the Actual Completion of the International Search

20 February 1992

Date of Mailing of this International Search Report

18 MAR 1992

International Searching Authority

ISA/US

Signature of Authorized Officer

for Mike Fatahiyar *REG'D. AGENT FOR PCT*
INTERNATIONAL DIVISION